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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001262

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA, ABU
DHABI PASS TO A/S WELCH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2016
TAGS: PREL PGOV KWBG KPAL KDEM IS
SUBJECT: PLC APPROVES HAMAS-LED CABINET, GOVERNMENT PLATFORM

REF: A. JERUSALEM 001175

¶B. FBIS GMP20060327541002

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

¶1.   (C) Summary. Following two-days of debate, the
Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) March 28 approved the
Hamas government platform and 24-member Palestinian cabinet.
The vote was 71 in favor, 36 against, with two abstentions.
Fatah and Third Way PLC members led the opposition to the
government platform, charging that the platform was vague and
contradicted the terms outlined by Palestinian Authority (PA)
President Mahmud Abbas. The cabinet is expected to be sworn
in by President Abbas on March 29. End summary.

PLC Approves Cabinet

¶2.   (SBU) The PLC March 28 approved the Hamas-led cabinet
and government platform by a vote of 71 in favor, 36 against,
and two abstentions. Support for the government platform and
cabinet derived from the 66-member Hamas bloc, with support
from the four PLC independents, and one PFLP representative.
Fatah and Third Way voted against the government platform and
cabinet. PLC member Mustafa Barghouthi (Independent
Palestine) was one of two abstentions in the PLC vote.

¶3.   (SBU) With the PLC's approval of the new government,
the following ministers will make up the next PA cabinet.
(Note: The list corresponds to those individuals identified
in ref A, with the exception of Tourism Minister Joudah
Murqos, a Christian who replaced Tannus Abu Eitah after he
declined that position following intense pressure from Fatah.
 End note.):

-- Isma'il Haniyyah: Prime Minister and Minister of Youth and
Sports
-- Naser Eddin al-Sha'er: Deputy PM and Minister of Education
and Higher Education
-- Omar 'Abd al-Raziq: Minister of Finance
-- Mahmud al-Zahar: Minister of Foreign Affairs
-- Sa'id Siyam: Minister of Interior and National Security
-- Ahmad al-Khalidi: Minister of Justice
-- Attallah Abu al-Sabeh: Minister of Culture
-- Yusif Rizqah: Minister of Information
-- Basem Na'im: Minister of Health
-- Samir Abu Eisheh: Minister of Planning
-- Issa al-Jabari: Minister of Local Government
-- Ala-Eddin al-Araj: Minister of National Economy
-- 'Abd al-Rahman Zaydan: Minister of Housing and Public Works
-- Ziad Thatha: Minister of Transport
-- Jamal al-Khudari: Minister of Telecommunications and

Technology
-- Nayef Rajub: Minister of Waqf and Religious Affairs
-- Muhammad Ramadan al-Agha: Minister of Agriculture
-- Joudah Murqos: Minister of Tourism and Antiquities
-- Muhammad al-Barghouthi: Minister of Labor
-- Fakhri Turkman: Minister of Social Affairs
-- Wasfi Qabaha: Minister of Prisoners and Liberated Affairs
-- Maryam Saleh: Minister of Women Affairs
-- Dr. Atef Odwan: Minister of State responsible for refugee
affairs
-- Khalid Abu Arafeh: Minister of State responsible for
Jerusalem affairs
-- Muhammad Awad: Secretary of the Cabinet

Fatah Decries
Hamas Platform

¶4.   (C) Fatah PLC members charged that the Hamas government
platform -- presented to the PLC on March 27 by PM-designate
Isma'il Haniyyah -- was deliberately vague and lacked a real
vision for Palestinians. Fatah bloc opposition leader Azzam
al-Ahmad called on Hamas to act in harmony with PA President
Abbas' guidelines. Fatah legislators also criticized the
government platform for not recognizing the primacy of the
PLO. Fatah PLC member Dr. Bernard Sabella (Jerusalem) told
ConGen Poloff March 28 that he voted against the government
due to the lack of "open and frank language" in the
government platform. Sabella noted that PM-designate
Haniyyah had countered that criticism during the PLC session
by charging that it should not be Hamas' responsibility to
use explicit language in its platform while Israel has not
done the same.

¶5.   (C) During the debate, PLC member Salam Fayyad (Third
Way) criticized the government platform for failing to
provide responses to Israel's unilateral approach and for
lacking concrete proposals. The PFLP, while supporting the
government, indicated that it chose not to participate in the
government due to the failure to recognize the PLO. Al-Badil
(DFLP, Palestinian People's Party) representatives indicated
that they would consider more cooperation with the government
if it showed consideration on this point.

Sabella: Government
Platform Good Start

¶6.   (C) Sabella told ConGen Poloff that, while he voted
with his Fatah colleagues against the government platorm, in
his view the two-day debate involved frak and open-minded
exchanges of ideas. Sabella sid that he thought that the
Hamas platform allowe for opportunities to open channels
with Israel nd the international community. It was positive
that Hamas had left the door open to such discussins and
Hamas should be given the opportunity to overn without
interference. Sabella expressed cocern that Israel would
react negatively to the PLC's approval of the government by
mounting a campaign against the Hamas-led cabinet.

Haniyyah Outlines
Government Platform

¶7.   (SBU) In his March 27 speech before the PLC, Haniyyah
identified several challenges facing the next government,
namely: occupation; security chaos in Palestinian areas;
difficult economic conditions; administrative and financial
corruption; and developing relations with regional and
international actors. (Note: See March 27 FBIS translation
(ref B) of entire speech. End note.) Haniyyah confirmed
that the new government would be committed to the following:

-- Right of resistance: Reaffirmation of the right of
Palestinians to confront Israeli occupation and to struggle
for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state
with full sovereignty in Jerusalem as its capital. He
rejected Israel's disengagement plan, which Haniyyah said

aimed to transform Palestinian areas into cantons and
undermine the creation of a viable Palestinian state.
Haniyyah underscored the right of return and compensation for
Palestinian refugees.

-- PLO agreements: Dealing with the agreements that were
signed by the PLO and the PA "with a high degree of
responsibility and in a manner that serves the interests and
constant rights of our people."

-- Internal security: Improving the performance of the
security services.

-- Reform and government transparency: Administrative and
financial reform in conjunction with the PLC passing laws
that reinforce reform and fight corruption. Haniyyah gave
priority to reforming the PA financial system.

-- Transparency in the distribution of funds: Haniyyah
indicated that all funds provided to the PA would be directed
as allocated and spent only on projects for which they were
adopted. Haniyyah said the government would establish
mechanisms and provide guarantees to donor countries that
will ensure that the money is spent accordingly.

-- Seeking strong international relations: While criticizing
the USG for threats to halt assistance to Palestinians,
Haniyyah said the new government would work on establishing
ties with various countries and international organizations.
He expressed a desire to establish relations with the
European Union, but called on the EU to take an active role
in exerting pressure on the GOI to end the occupation.

-- Haniyyah called on the Quartet to accept the democratic
choice made by the Palestinians and to cease threatening
sanctions. He indicated that the government was prepared for
dialogue with the Quartet.

WALLES